

**Faculty Research Grant 2019
Final Report**

**Lifestyle Characteristics and Employment Discrimination:
I've Got Mine, You're On Your Own**

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Submitted: May 2019

B. Restatement of problem researched or creative activity:

- Employees may experience lifestyle discrimination by employers for perceived negative characteristics or activities, such as smoking, drinking, gambling, sexuality, social media usage, or physical appearance.
- This study explored the attitudes of college students toward lifestyle discrimination, focusing on the possible impact of an individual's own perceived negative characteristics on his or her tolerance for such discrimination by employers.

C. Brief review of the research procedure utilized:

Students in sophomore- and junior-level courses were asked to voluntarily complete a questionnaire on characteristics, lifestyles and employment discrimination:

397 respondents

52.4% female

37.4% under 21

61.5% Business majors

Respondents self-identified with six negative characteristics:

Alcohol use (58.1%)

Legal gambling (45.0%)

Visible body art (38.4%)

Tobacco use (21.5%)

Weight issues (20.7%)

Poor credit (10.5%)

Number of respondents with multiple characteristics:

0 – 15.1%

1 – 23.0%

2 – 30.7%

3 – 18.9%

4 – 8.7%

5 – 3.3%

6 – 0.3%

Perceived level of personal offense at discrimination was compared between respondents with fewer negative characteristics (0 or 1) and those with more negative characteristics (2+):

Discriminatory Focus: How offended are you by employment discrimination for:	Level of Offense at Employment Discrimination (1 = none, 2 = slight, 3 = moderate, 4 = high)		
	FNC: Mean 0, 1 (149, 38.1%)	MNC: Mean 2+ (242, 61.9%)	Mean Difference
Attractiveness? *	3.08	2.79	0.29
Political Affiliation? *	3.00	2.68	0.31
Alcohol Off Duty? *	2.93	2.59	0.34
Homosexual Activities? *	2.91	2.56	0.35
Shopping at a Competitor? *	2.90	2.58	0.33
Tobacco Off Duty? *	2.90	2.61	0.29
Free Speech Off Duty? *	2.89	2.60	0.28
Adult Entertainment? *	2.76	2.46	0.29

* Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level

D. Summary of findings:

- Given that such discrimination could work against them, people with more perceived negative characteristics (2+) might be expected to be less accepting of lifestyle discrimination than their counterparts with fewer negative characteristics (0, 1).
- This study found the opposite result. Respondents with more negative characteristics were more accepting of lifestyle discrimination in employment than respondents with fewer negative characteristics.
- This may have implications for employers' hiring and training practices as social acceptance for varying lifestyles increases and the job market tightens with a younger working-age demographic.

E. Conclusions and recommendations:

- Respondent toleration of employment discrimination for negative lifestyle characteristics is a proxy in this study for toleration of discrimination of the characteristics themselves
- Respondents that should seem to be more tolerant of others with negative lifestyle characteristics actually seem to be less tolerant than those with fewer such characteristics
- Employer and employee attitudes toward lifestyle discrimination should be investigated, and student attitudes should be updated as needed

Note: These results were presented at the online sessions of the Fall 2018 Academy of Business Research Conference.



Academy of Business Research Fall 2018 Conference

November 14-16, 2018

Lynn University

Boca Raton, FL

1:00 PM Wednesday November 14th
Sponsor: Journal of Marketing Perspectives
Virtual

Session Chair: Robert Reich, Lynn University

Psychological Distancing Effect: The Great Hypocrisy Syndrome

Sean Walker, University of Tennessee at Martin

It's a "No Problem" World: The Complexities of Educating and Training Millennials AND Why They ARE Worth It

Sean Walker, University of Tennessee at Martin

Lifestyle Characteristics and Employment Discrimination: I've Got Mine, You're On Your Own

Stephen Jones, Arkansas Tech University

Tracy Cole, Arkansas Tech University

Daniel Warwick, Arkansas Tech University

The Positive Effect of Emotionally Expressive Leadership on Individual Perceptions of Group Trust and Knowledge Sharing Norms

Mark Podolsky, York University

Len Karakowsky, York University

Debunking the Myth of Professional Network Disadvantage of Online MBAs

Timothy Veach, Northwest Christian University

A Dichotomous Model of Customer Satisfaction

Álvaro Carreras, Jr., Barry University